

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 CPR-01 PA-01 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3864

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0576

EUR PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR BYRNE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, CZ
SUBJECT: MFA DRAWS EMBASSY'S ATTENTION TO MILATT DRIVING INCIDENT

1. MFA SIXTH DEPT DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY CALLED IN CHARGE
MARCH 2 TO READ ACCOUNT OF A DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVING
"THE CREW OF EMBASSY VEHICLE DD2003" (I.E. CAR OF ARMY ATTACHE)
ON FEBRUARY 14. ZANTOVSKY NOTED THIS VEHICLE HAD ENTERED A RURAL
SIDE ROAD MARKED WITH A "NO ENTRY" SIGN. THE DRIVER THEN BROKE
THROUGH A BARRICADE, LEAVING A SOLDIER ON DUTY THERE IN A STATE OF
SHOCK, IN FACT, HOSPITALIZED FOR 2-3 DAYS THEREAFTER.
ZANTOVSKY CAUTIONED THAT "MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES" WILL BE TAKEN TO
PREVENT SUCH OCCURENCES IN THE FUTURE AND HOPED EMBASSY WOULD
CAREFULLY "WEIGH RESULTS " OF ALL THIS. HE CONCLUDED BY ASSERTING
THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE NOT ENHANCED WHEN EMBASSY OFFICERS PAY
"NO ATTENTION TO THE HEALTH OF OUR SOLDIERS, IGNORE INTERNATIONAL
TRAFFIC
SIGNS AND TRY TO OBSERVE MILITARY ACTIVITIES."

2. CHARGE TOOK NOTE OF ZANTOVSKY'S REMARKS AND INDICATED HE
WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER. HE FELT CERTAIN THAT ALL EMBASSY
OFFICERS PAID CLOSE ATTENTION TO LOCAL HIGHWAY SIGNS BUT
INDICATED THAT IF AN EMBASSY CAR DID, IN FACT, SOMEHOW CAUSE
INJURY TO TH HEALTH OF ANY CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZEN, THIS WAS TO BE
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REGRETTED. BEYOND THAT HE COULD NOT COMMENT UNTIL HE WAS
IN POSSESSION OF ALL AVAILABLE FACTS.

3. AS CHARGE TOOK HIS LEAVE, ZANTOVSKY SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO
"ESCALATE" THIS KIND OF SITUATION. THUS, HE WAS NOT ISSUING A
FORMAL PROTEST; HE SIMPLY WANTED TO BRING THE REPORTED INCIDENT TO
EMBASSY'S ATTANTION.

4. COMMENT: SINCE THIS MID-FEBRUARY INCIDENT (REPORTED SEPARATELY IN DAO CHANNELS) EMBASSY MILATTS HAVE EXERCISED INCREASED CAUTION IN THEIR ONGOING FIELD TRIPS TO AREAS OF ACTIVITY INVOLVING CZECHOSLOVAK AND/OR SOVIET FORCES. MEANWHILE, WE HAVE NOTED STEPPED-UP SURVEILLANCE RECENTLY OF ALL EMBOFFS, WHO ARE CONSEQUENTLY ALSO EXERCISING INCREASED VIGILANCE WHILE DRIVING EITHER THEIR OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES.
FROWICK

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Message Attributes

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